



GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE

Success Story

Green Jobs Funding Benefits Yukon Community and Youth

WATSON LAKE IS CONSIDERED,
Canada's gateway to the Yukon.

The tight knit community of 800 people is surrounded by untouched wilderness, and is nestled along the Alaska Highway. Every year, tourists and residents enjoy the town's many outdoor activities including days on the beach at Lucky Lake, hiking trails and community events at Wye Lake Park, and numerous community playgrounds.



TOWN OF WATSON LAKE,
YUKON

Canada

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Alyssa Magun, town’s manager of Parks and Recreation

As the town’s manager of Parks and Recreation, Alyssa Magun looks after all these well-loved spaces. But she can’t do it by herself, and often needs extra staff and funding to keep these areas maintained and clean for all to enjoy.

During the summer of 2021, she finally got the help she needed and was able to hire three parks caretakers – all jobs supported by the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative, which is funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Skills Strategy program.

“We may be a small town, but we have lots of outdoor spaces,” says Alyssa. “It’s very time consuming to try to get it all (maintained) and if we didn’t have the kids, I don’t know what I would have done. It was imperative, and it meant a lot for me. I honestly needed them.”

Alyssa says the students who were hired did a great job maintaining the town’s playgrounds, equipment and structures, as well as cleaning up areas within Watson Lake such as its trails and parks.

“We have a lot of playgrounds, a lot of green space, and a lot of trails,” she says. “You have to worry about broken glass, you have to worry about trees down. And we just don’t have the time, the manpower or the funds to get everything done that needs to be done.”

Alyssa says that residents also took notice, and she received many compliments on the town’s cleanliness and beauty.

She adds that the funding was also beneficial for the students.

In their roles, she says local youth learned many skills to help them with future employment – including the importance of a safe and healthy community, recycling, and lawn maintenance.

The jobs also taught the students responsibility, and the importance of working independently.

Alyssa adds that the opportunity also helped students who were having trouble looking for summer employment.

“There’s a lot of these young guys who are looking for jobs, but they’re hard to find or they don’t have the qualifications,” Alyssa says, adding that the jobs also gave students the opportunity to save for post secondary school. “Some of the kids here in town are looking for work in the summer months. And being far north, with funds not readily available for them for schooling, (these jobs allow them to) save for school. I always feel like it’s good for me to have them, but it’s good for them too.”

Alyssa says she is grateful for the funding, and hopes she can apply again next year.

“I try to find as much funding anywhere that I can, so that we can hire youth every season for various jobs, in various buildings, with Parks and Recreation,” she says. “So, a lot of the time if I didn’t have the funding, I wouldn’t be able to hire them.” 🍁